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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001849

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MA](#) [NI](#) [LI](#) [OAU](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA RESPONDS TO MADAGASCAR DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 119427

[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 2193

CLASSIFIED BY CDA ANDREWS. REASON: 1.5(B)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Nigeria dislikes the way Ravalomanana came to power but likely will not oppose acceptance of his rule. Nigeria is not a member of the OAU Central Organ. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Because all GON officials (Presidency and MFA) able to discuss Madagascar were unavailable June 20, CDA could not make ref A demarche until June 21. MFA Under Secretary for Africa Femi George took essentially the same position as Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tekeda (ref B). Clearly unhappy with Ravalomanana, George said, inter alia:

-- Ravalomanana had "committed an illegality in the face of the OAU."

-- The "OAU Convention cannot be set aside just because we like someone."

-- "He should not have taken power by force; he should have exhausted the Constitutional process."

[1](#)3. (C) George went on to assert that the OAU was trying to examine how to contend with the fact that Ravalomanana now controlled 80% of Madagascar. Taking on board our point about Ratsiraka's departure, George opined that, as a result of this action, "we would probably see some movement" in Addis. While Nigeria was not a member of the OAU Central Organ and not directly involved in the discussions, it was possible that consultations were taking place at the Head of State level.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: George also alluded to fighting in Liberia, worrying that whatever decision the OAU took might set a precedent that would affect Liberia, much closer to home and more central to Nigeria's foreign policy than Madagascar. Given Nigeria's importance on the continent, it is unlikely that Nigeria is not being consulted. Despite his lengthy expression of annoyance at Ravalomanana's rise to power by means other than a clearly Constitutional transfer of power, George indicated that Nigeria would not block an eventual acceptance of his government.

ANDREWS